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First record of *Limnatis nilotica* from Oman (Hirudinea: Hirudinidae)

by
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Abstract: Two records of *Limnatis nilotica* from Oman are listed. The leeches and their habitat are described.
Key words: *Limnatis nilotica*, Oman

Introduction

The sultanate of Oman, located in the East of the Arabian Peninsula, is characterized by large deserts and high mountains with numerous wadis. Some of them, especially in the region of the al-Hadjar-mountains in the north of the country are permanent water bodies, inhabited by several true freshwater species. Until now there exist only some publications about leeches from Saudi-Arabia (Kinzelbach & Rückert 1984) and from Yemen (Al-Safadi 1991, Al-Safadi & El-Shimy 1993), but hitherto no published records of leeches from Oman are known.

Material and methods

In march 1996 two wadis in northern Oman were investigated by one of us (R.F.). Several aquatic invertebrates were collected by hand. The material was preserved in 70% ethanol. The specimens are deposited in the author´s collection and in the collection of the Department of Zoology of the Hungarian Natural History Museum (HNHM).

The sampling sites are situated near to the oasis of Nizwa and Sumail with an altitude of about 700-1000 m a.s.l. Both wadis are located in the al-Hadjar mountains, the oasis of Sumail is next to the foothills of the „Jebel Akhdar" (3.075 m a.s.l.). The first sampling-site is the left bank of the wadi 0.5 km SE of the Quaboos-Mosque in Nizwa. The second sampling site is a wadi approximately 10 km S of the Sumail-pass next to the road Sumail-Sur at the right bank.

Results

In both wadis, the benthic fauna comprises species of Hirudinea, Gastropoda, Turbellaria and a few aquatic insects. In addition, some exuviae of ephemeropteran larvae were found. The material and habitat of the single leech species is characterised.

Family Hirudinidae

Limnatis nilotica (Savigny, 1822)

Material: Wadi in Nizwa, 3 spec., 19. march 1996; Wadi near Sumail, 2 spec., 19. march 1996, leg. R. Forster, det. H. Nesemann. The size of the leeches is presented in Table 1.

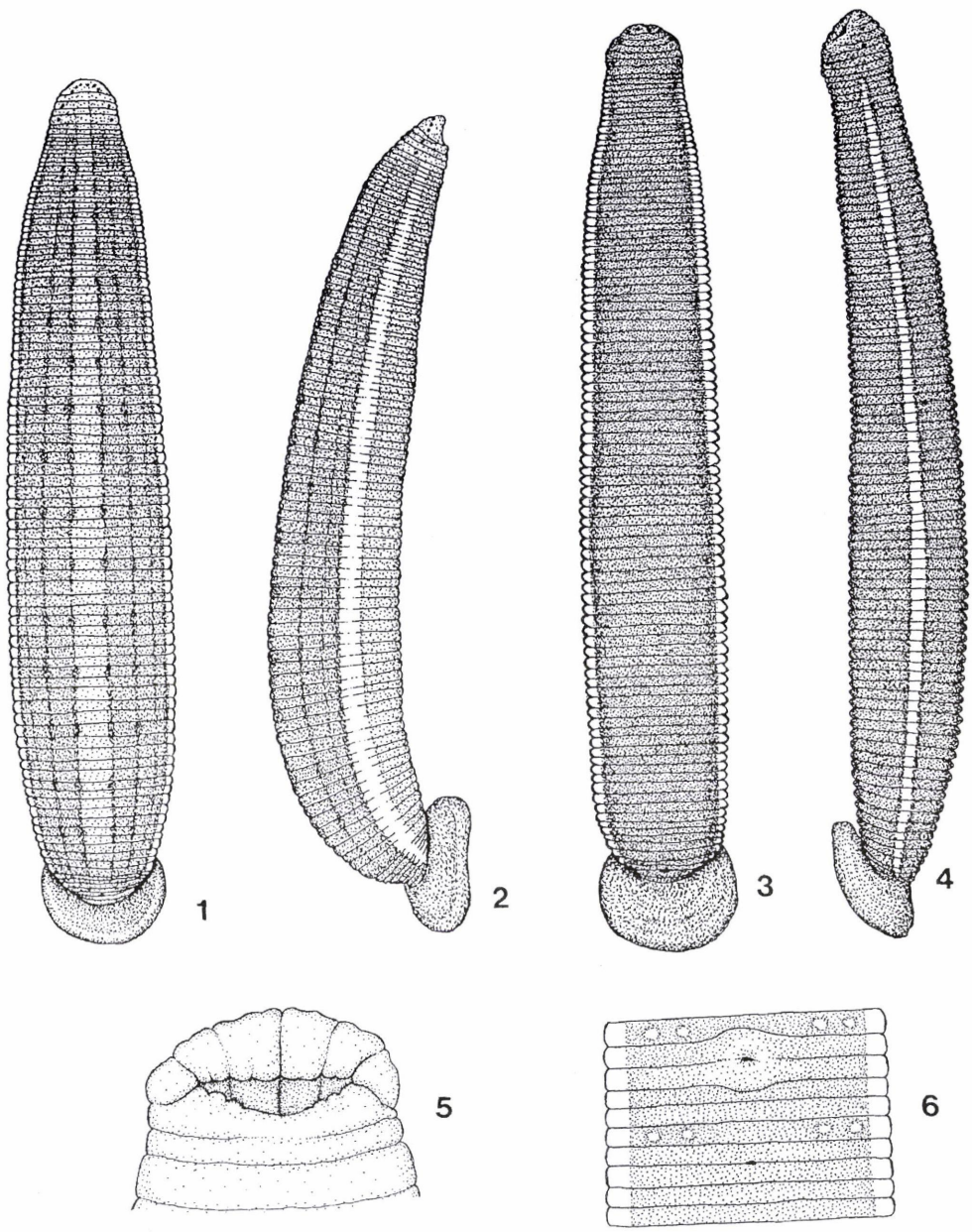
Table 1. Sizes of the collected individuals

no. of specimen	locality	body lenght (mm)	body width (mm)	diameter of the caudal sucker (mm)
1	Nizwa	32	7,0	5,5
2	Nizwa	33	4,5	5,0
3	Nizwa	32	5,0	5,5
4	Sumail	34	4,0	5,5
5	Sumail	9,5	1,5	2,0

Notes: The living adults are unicoloured dark greyish-brown with one pair of broad marginal orange stripes. There are neither regularly arranged black spots nor lines on the dorsal surface of the body. In contrast to the adults the juvenile specimen from Sumail bears dorsally six longitudinal black lines, as in many mediterranean populations of this species (Figs. 1-2). The genital pores of all investigated specimens are separated by five annuli (Fig. 6). A closely related species *Limnatis paluda* (Tennent, 1859) known from Sri Lanka and Pakistan (Harding & Moore 1927, Sawyer 1986), was listed from several localities for the fauna of Saudi Arabia (Kinzelbach & Rückert 1984). Its systematic position is insufficiently investigated, because *L. paluda* should differ from *L. nilotica* only by some uncertain characters. Nevertheless our material from Oman clearly belongs to *L. nilotica* because of the presence of metameric colour markings and prominent marginal stripes.

Habitat: The water bodies inhabited by *L. nilotica* are characterized by Witenberg & Izak (1967) as rainpools along wadis. Bromley (1994) summarized the habitats as springs, wells, water-troughs, small streams, ponds, ditches and reservoirs, where mammals come to drink, and/or where amphibians can be found. Al-Safadi & El-Shimy (1993) have mentioned *L. nilotica* as widespread species in most perennial waterbodies of Yemen.

The investigated wadis in Oman are permanent water-bodies with extended lentic regions and a depth of 2 – 10 cm on average, and in some parts up to 30 cm. They are strongly sunlit, the water-temperature is about 25 – 30 °C. The substratum consists of rocks, stones, pebbles and sand without any muddy zones covered by numerous green algae. The wadi near Nizwa was remarkably polluted by blood of slaughtered animals. The benthic fauna of the wadi near Sumail comprises numerous individuals of the freshwater-snail *Melanoides tuberculatus* (O. F. Müller, 1774) and the triclad *Dugesia* sp. In the wadi near Nizwa two gastropods *M. tuberculatus*, *Radix natalensis* (Krauss, 1848) and several unidentified Heteroptera could be found frequently.



Figs 1-6. *Limnatis nilotica* (Savigny, 1822); 1 = Dorsal view; 2 = Lateral view; Tunisia; 3 = Dorsal view; 4 = Lateral view, Oman, Nizwa; 5 = Cranial sucker with median fold, ventral view; 6 = Position of the male and female gonopores, ventral view

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